

Précis 8: CSS 2015

Q.2: Write a précis of the following passage and suggest a suitable title:

(20)

In studying the breakdowns of civilizations, the writer has subscribed to the conclusion no new discovery! - that war has proved to have been the proximate cause of the breakdown of every civilization which is known for certain to have broken down, in so far as it has been possible to analyze the nature of these breakdowns and to account for their occurrence. Like other evils, war has an insidious way of appearing not intolerable until it has secured such a stranglehold upon the lives of its addicts that they no longer have the power to escape from its grip when its deadliness has become manifest. In the early stages of a civilization's growth, the cost of wars in suffering and destruction might seem to be exceeded by the benefits accruing from the winning of wealth and power and the cultivation of the "military virtues"; and, in this phase of history, states have often found themselves able to indulge in war with one another with something like impunity even for the defeated party. War does not begin to reveal its malignity till the war-making society has begun to increase its economic ability to exploit physical nature and its political ability to organize manpower; but, as soon as this happens, the god of war to which the growing society has long since been dedicated proves himself a Moloch by devouring an ever larger share of the increasing fruits of man's industry and intelligence in the process of taking an ever larger toll of life and happiness; and, when the society's growth in efficiency reaches a point at which it becomes capable of mobilizing a lethal quantum of its energies and resources for military use, then war reveals itself as being a cancer which is bound to prove fatal to its victim unless he can cut it out and cast it from him, since its malignant tissues have now learnt to grow faster than the healthy tissues on which they feed.

In the past, when this danger-point in the history of the relations between war and civilization has been reached and recognized, serious efforts have sometimes been made to get rid of war in time to save society, and these endeavours have been apt to take one or other of two alternative directions. Salvation cannot, of course, be sought anywhere except in the working of the consciences of individual human beings; but individuals have a choice between trying to achieve their aims through direct action as private citizens and trying to achieve them through indirect action as citizens of states. A personal refusal to lend himself in any way to any war waged by his state for any purpose and in any circumstances is a line of attack against the institution of war that is likely to appeal to an ardent and self-sacrificing nature; by comparison, the alternative peace strategy of seeking to persuade and accustom governments to combine in jointly resisting aggression when it comes and in trying to remove its stimuli beforehand may seem a circuitous and unheroic line of attack on the problem. Yet experience up to date indicates unmistakably, in the present writer's opinion, that the second of these two hard roads are by far the more promising.

Precis

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A historical study into the causes of breakdowns of civilizations shows that the breakdown has been caused by warfare. War has suppressed the lives of its victims as they have no power to free from its hold. Furthermore, wars have done more harm than benefits in the initial stages of civilization and states have found impunity for the warring parties. In modern age, war becomes more disastrous as societies gain ability to utilize their resources and manpower and it has been proved lethal and concious when society achieve its sustainable growth. However, society can be protected from the scourge of war in two ways: by individual efforts of citizens who can refuse to participate in war and by the collective efforts on the part of governments. Hence, it has been experienced that the better of two

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options is the one involving alternative
Peace-^{making} Strategy adopted by various
governments.

• Summary:

- 1) Words in original passage = 639
- 2) Words required = 213
- 3) Words in next draft = 149
- 4) Title = War the cause of breakdown
of civilization.